

## NC DEPARTMENT OF **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Interim Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Restaurants and Bars**

March 14, 2020

Any scenario in which many people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission, including seating areas, waiting rooms, lines, and any other time a large number of people are in the same space. All restaurants, bars, and other food service providers should create a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission at their establishment.

This guidance will help restaurants and bars plan and prepare for COVID-19 in their communities.

#### **Plan Ahead**

- ☐ Review any emergency plans you already have and update them if necessary.
- ☐ Make a plan for what you will do if large numbers of employees are unable to attend work, which may occur if schools are closed or their family members are sick. Identify key positions and cross-train staff to ensure all essential functions will be covered.
- ☐ Consider alternative options to gathering lots of people in a small area, such as having people wait in their cars and alerting them by phone when their table is ready instead of standing in a waiting area.
- ☐ Stay informed about COVID-19 in your community.

#### **Communicate**

- ☐ Instruct patrons to stay home if they are sick. Be flexible about cancelling or rescheduling reservations and events so sick people and people taking care of COVID-19 patients are able to stay home.
- ☐ If you have employees who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19, including people over 65 and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, chronic lung disease and chronic heart disease, or a compromised immune system (e.g., cancer, cancer treatment, or other immunosuppressant treatments), find positions that minimize contact with the public.
- ☐ Create flexible sick leave policies so employees stay home from work when they are sick.
- ☐ Post signs encouraging patrons to leave immediately if they begin to show symptoms of illness, COVID-19 or otherwise.

#### **Keep Everyone Healthy**

- ☐ Have respiratory hygiene supplies available for employees and patrons, including hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, tissues, and lined trash cans. These supplies should be placed at entrances, near host stands, in the kitchen, and any other locations necessary.
- ☐ Promote behaviors that prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including COVID-19, among patrons and employees. Use resources from a trusted source like the CDC or NC DHHS.

- ☐ Disinfect frequently-touched surfaces with a cleaning agent that is effective against coronaviruses throughout the day and at close of business.
- ☐ According to the FDA, there is no evidence at this time that COVID-19 can be transmitted through food or food packaging. Food service establishments should still follow all standard hygiene and food safety practices when preparing or handling food.

### **Practice Social Distancing**

- ☐ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) state people should practice social distancing by remaining six feet apart to minimize the risk of coronavirus infection. Recognizing that this may be challenging, below are examples of application.
- ☐ Place tables six feet apart from each other. If necessary, close some tables to ensure that there is adequate space between groups of patrons.
- ☐ If you typically have people waiting in line, consider marking six-foot intervals on the floor for patrons to stand on.
- ☐ Only let as many people in as your establishment can accommodate while everyone remains six feet apart. If people must wait to be let in, have them wait in their cars and contact them by phone when they can enter.
- ☐ Have employees remain six feet apart from patrons whenever possible. (CDC defines close contact as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for 10 or more minutes.)

### **Cancelling or Postponing Events**

- ☐ As directed the Governor, all events greater than 100 people should be postponed or cancelled to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.
- ☐ If your establishment hosts events that gather up to 100 people, please read the guidance about managing events.

### **Patrons Later Diagnosed with COVID-19**

- ☐ If a patron is diagnosed with COVID-19 after visiting your facility, your local health department may ask you for contact information for anyone who may have had close contact with the patient.
  - ☐ If this occurs, attendees who had close contact with the COVID-19 patient will be asked to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days.
- ☐ If you are concerned about a patron who was diagnosed with COVID-19 shortly after visiting your business, contact your local health department.
- ☐ To prevent the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from contact with contaminated surfaces, ensure that all high contact areas of the facility are cleaned with an agent that is active against coronaviruses.

For more information about COVID-19 preparedness for businesses, please see the CDC's Resources for Businesses and Employers.

For general information about COVID-19, refer to the North Carolina COVID-19 website.

# COVID-19 Guidance for Food Establishments



The novel coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19, is causing respiratory illness throughout North Carolina, and cases of community spread are likely. Questions arise on the likelihood of food service establishments to serve as a source of potential community outbreak. Currently, food has not been identified as a primary mode of transmission for COVID-19, but food service establishments can still take steps to protect their employees and customers. The following recommendations should be used in food service establishments:

General control measures can be implemented by food service employees to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19:

1. Practice good hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette:
  - Hands should be cleaned often using proper technique. Handwashing should include using soap and warm water, scrubbing all portions of hands and fingers for 20 seconds, rinsing with warm running water, and drying with a single-use towel.
  - Avoid touching your face as much as possible, specifically avoiding contact with eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - When sneezing, ensure a tissue is used, and that coughing is done into a tissue or one's elbow. Properly wash hands immediately after disposing of tissue or coughing.
2. Follow employee health policy and stay home when symptomatic
  - Employee health policy that excludes symptoms and illnesses found in Chapter 2 of the NC Food Code must continue to be followed. If a food service worker (food handler, server, cashier, etc.) is exhibiting symptoms of a fever (100.4°F or greater on an oral thermometer), excessive coughing and sneezing, or other respiratory symptoms, they should also be excluded from work.
  - Individuals should remain home until asymptomatic for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).
  - Individuals providing care for a sick family member should practice additional precautions, including wearing gloves when available, and washing hands thoroughly after providing care, cleaning, and before leaving the house. The use of respiratory masks for the general public is not recommended.

The following control measures can be implemented by food service establishments to reduce the risk of customers within your establishment spreading COVID-19:

1. Perform routine environmental cleaning
  - Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces, including menus and digital ordering systems, condiment containers, salt and pepper shakers, countertops, doors and door handles, etc., with the cleaners that are EPA-approved for emerging viral pathogens. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. Chlorine disinfectant can be made by using 1/3 cup of household bleach and 1 gallon of water (1,000 ppm chlorine).
  - Surfaces that are visibly dirty should be cleaned with detergent and rinsed before being disinfected.
  - Use disposable gloves when cleaning high touch surfaces. Ensure gloves are changed frequently when changing cleaning locations to avoid additional spread of contamination and wash hands immediately after removing gloves.

2. Provide additional precautions for customers within the establishment

- Ensure adequate supply and convenient placement of alcohol-based hand sanitizers for use by customers inside food establishment.
- Provide extra supplies of napkins or tissues for customers to use when coughing or sneezing.
- If customer self-service is done within the establishment, consider additional employee oversight so contaminated surfaces can be cleaned, and any contaminated food or utensils can be removed.
- Based on volume and peak usage of self-service areas, replace utensils in these areas more frequently. Ensure food in self-service areas is properly protected using covers and sneeze shields.

Stay informed and updated on this rapidly changing situation using reliable information sources. The CDC and NC DHHS websites listed below will have updated guidance and information as it becomes available. If you have specific questions regarding the outbreak, contact your local health department environmental health specialist or communicable disease nurse.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina>

provided to school children. However, the following steps need to be taken to ensure the food is safe during transport and delivery.

**1 Delivery Drivers must follow employee health guidance for food service workers.**

**Do not work if sick with: vomiting, diarrhea, or fever and cough**

**2 Prior to leaving with meals for delivery, have log filled out with temperature and time of food when removed from refrigerator**

**Food cannot be taken out for delivery if it is not 41F or below**

**3 All food must be properly labeled with a time food must be consumed by, which is no more than 4 hours after removing from temperature control.**



Boxed lunch meals and cold meal service includes additional cooling and other food safety challenges. Follow these steps to ensure safe preparation of boxed lunch meals

**When possible, boxed meal components should be prepared a day in advance and allowed to cool to 41F or below**

**Pre-chill all components of boxed or bagged meal, even if they do not require refrigeration, including:**

- **Bags/boxes**
- **Napkins, condiments, utensils**
- **Chips**
- **Apple or other fruit**
- **Drinks**

**Utilize any available walk-in space for assembling of bags under temperature control**





Only food workers should be in kitchen or food storage areas.

If you see someone or something that looks out of place, make sure to tell the manager!

## *Wash Your Hands*

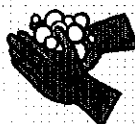
Hands are the #1 vehicle for cross-contamination. Use the following steps to properly wash hands before handling food, after using the restroom, after switching from raw to ready-to-eat foods, and whenever else necessary.



**RINSE**



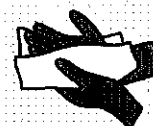
**ADD SOAP**



**SCRUB**



**RINSE**



**DRY**

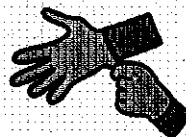
## *Cover Food*

Be sure to properly cover all food containers before transporting, and any time food is not in use. When not covered, food can be contaminated by dust, flies, or other environmental contaminants.



## *Wear Gloves*

You must wear gloves or use a clean utensil for handling food. Be sure to discard soiled or damaged gloves and wash hands before replacing with a new pair.



## *Don't Work Sick*

When food preparers work sick, they put customers at risk of contracting illness.

Do not work if you have the following symptoms:

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- jaundice



## *Keep Food out of the Temperature Danger Zone*

When food is between 41°F and 135°F, bacteria can multiply rapidly.

Ensure food is the proper temperature with a food thermometer.

**COLD FOODS: < 41°F**

**DANGER ZONE**

**HOT FOODS: > 135°F**

## *Cook all Food to the Proper Final Internal Temperature:*

135°F for 15 seconds

Commercially cooked foods

145°F for 15 seconds

Fish, eggs, and whole cuts of beef, pork, and lamb

155°F for 15 seconds

Ground or mechanically tenderized meats, except poultry

165°F for 15 seconds

All poultry and stuffed products

